Increase.in China's Defence Budget

3238. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:
SHRI NANA DESHMUKH:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item "China's Defence Budget Worries Experts" appearing in the Times of India dated 7th March, 2002;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to address the problems highlighted in the report in bringing about a political-military correlation in India's Defence budgetary exercise?

' THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Government is aware that China has recently announced an increase in its defence budget to modernise the People's Liberation Army and enhance its combat capabilities.

Allocation to the defence budget of India has been finalised keeping the threat perception on all the borders of the country.

Government remains vigilant and takes all necessary measures from time to time to maintain appropriate defence preparedness and to safeguard the sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of India.

Joint naval exercise by India and Singapore

3239. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a 10 days joint exercise by the Indian and Republic of Singapore Navy was conducted recently at Kochi coast; and

(b) if so, how far it has been successful?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The fourth bilateral exercise between Indian Navy and Republic of Singapore Navy was conducted off Kochi from 4-15 March, 2002. The objective of the exercise was achieved.